

***A Draft Proposal to Streamline the Course Major Articulation Process between UC
Campuses and California Community Colleges
(Draft Only –February 25, 2003)***

The University of California (UC) has worked hard to improve the transfer of students between UC and California Community Colleges (CCCs). One cornerstone of this effort is the development of “articulation agreements” to show how a course or groups of courses at a CCC may be transferred for credit to a UC or California State University (CSU) campus. General education articulation agreements show how certain courses satisfy GE requirements at the UC/CSU campuses. Similarly, major-preparation articulation agreements delineate how community college courses will satisfy the lower division course requirements for UC academic majors.

UC faculty are responsible for the review and approval of articulation agreements between UC campuses and CCCs. In each discipline, they review community college course outlines and supplementary material to determine if a course offered at a community college is comparable enough to the UC course that it can be accepted for credit. Depending on the type of articulation agreement, credit can be granted as general elective credit (Transfer Course Agreement or TCA), general education curriculum credit (Intersegmental General Education Transfer Curriculum or IGETC), or campus-specific credit (campus general education credit or major preparation credit). Of these, the annual TCA and IGETC agreements are developed systemwide by UCOP staff working under faculty supervision, and in the case of IGETC, also in conjunction with CSU faculty and staff. UC has long-established TCA and IGETC agreements with all of the CCCs.

Developing campus-level articulation agreements between institutions is a mammoth undertaking. Given the 108 CCCs, 8 (soon to be 9) undergraduate UC campuses and approximately 650 distinct undergraduate majors offered in the UC system, about 70,000 separate major-preparation articulation agreements are needed for UC to be fully articulated with the CCCs. Creating and keeping track of these agreements between and among campuses is costly, yet vital to the transfer process. Transfer students and counselors at the community colleges rely on the agreements to provide students with the appropriate roadmap in their preparation for the BA degree to which the student plans to transfer. Unfortunately, major-preparation agreements between many UC campuses and many CCCs do not exist. Without major-preparation agreements, potential transfer students will know if the course they are taking is generally transferable by consulting the TCA, but they will not know if the department at a particular UC campus will accept the course as lower division preparation for the major.

To distribute articulation agreements statewide to students, counselors and others, the University has contributed significant resources to ASSIST¹, an intersegmental, web-based, transfer planning system. ASSIST is the State’s official repository of all official articulation between California Community Colleges and UC and CSU campuses. Any student can log onto ASSIST for free and determine how the courses they complete at a community college will transfer to a CSU or UC campus, assuming that a major-preparation articulation agreement has been established.

Although ASSIST has been in place for over a decade and has effectively categorized articulation agreements among the three segments, the inefficient process for generating agreements between UC campuses and individual community colleges has changed little since the 1960s. All UC campuses essentially conduct a review of every community college course every few years to determine how such courses may be used to satisfy campus-specific major or campus-specific GE requirements. This process is conducted in practically the same way, in parallel fashion, at the undergraduate UC campuses.

¹ *Articulation System Stimulating Interinstitutional Student Transfer*

Streamlining Articulation (Draft Only)

The course approval process conducted on each UC campus appropriately gives that faculty oversight of courses that are proposed for transfer into their curriculum. It assures that the faculty members who design courses and curricula can protect the integrity of the curriculum at each UC campus. In this way, program faculty should be confident that transferring students are adequately prepared to succeed in the curriculum offered at a particular UC campus.

It seems likely, though, that the course review and approval process across the campuses can be streamlined to provide faster and more efficient development of articulation agreements, particularly where consensus exists among a number of UC campuses. UC Academic Senate leaders and Student Academic Services staff at UCOP have been discussing ways to simplify the course approval process, while protecting the faculty's prerogative to approve or deny community courses for credit toward an undergraduate major at their own campus.

The following draft proposal has been developed to try to improve the articulation process for major-preparation courses taught at the California Community Colleges:

When an identical major-preparation articulation agreement has been developed by five or more UC campuses, a California Community College course will be deemed as articulated for all UC campuses unless one or more campuses develops a different, campus-specific agreement within a 120-day review period. A 90-day review period also will be available each year for individual campuses to review their acceptance of previous systemwide major preparation articulation agreements. Nothing in this process would affect the current treatment of courses articulated with the UC system as part of a TCA or IGETC agreement.

Under the proposal, faculty from each campus could choose to rely on the expertise of one another for the articulation of lower-division major-preparation courses offered at California Community Colleges. Campuses will be notified that the course is about to be designated acceptable at all UC campuses for a particular major, and there would be sufficient time to design and develop an alternative agreement should an alternative appear to be more appropriate at a given campus.

UC Academic Senate
Student Academic Services
UC Office of the President
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